

Amendments to Claims

1. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for hot gas blow-forming within a press, said apparatus comprising:

a first heater plate for mounting to said press, said first heater plate being integrally heated;

a first forming tool mounted to said first heater plate, such that said first forming tool is separately heated by said first heater plate;

a first insulation enclosure including a base portion positioned between said first heater plate and said press, said first insulation enclosure further including a perimeter wall surrounding said first heater plate and at least a portion of said first forming tool;

a second heater plate mounted to said press in opposed relationship to said first heater plate, said second heater plate being integrally heated;

a second forming tool mounted to said second heater plate, such that said second forming tool is separately heated by said second heater plate; and

a second insulation enclosure including a base portion positioned between said second heater plate and said press, said second insulation enclosure further including a perimeter wall surrounding said second heater plate and at least a portion of said second forming tool, wherein said apparatus closes together such that a portion of one of said insulation enclosures fits within a portion of the other of said insulation enclosures to define a closed insulation vessel so as to insulate said forming tools from the surrounding environment.

2. (canceled)

3. (canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising a perimeter seal mounted to one of said insulation enclosures for sealing engagement with the other of said insulation enclosures, wherein said perimeter seal mounts to the side of said one of said insulation enclosures and seals against the top of said other of said insulation enclosures.

5. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising at least one load-bearing spacer positioned between at least one of said first and second heater plates and said press.

6. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second insulation enclosures comprises non-load-bearing insulation.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second heater plates is mounted to said press via a platen mounted therebetween and to said press.

8. (canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second heater plates includes electrical resistance heating elements therein.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said press and said first and second forming tools are not integrally heated.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for a hot blow-forming process within a press, said apparatus comprising:

a heated and insulated tool container including:

a tool heater plate adapted for attachment to a platen of said press;

at least one load bearing spacer interposed said tool heater plate and said platen;

an insulation enclosure having:

a base portion interposed said tool heater plate and said platen; and

a perimeter wall portion extending in a substantially perpendicular direction away from said base portion and surrounding said tool heater plate; and

a forming tool mounted to said tool heater plate, such that said forming tool is separately heated by said tool heater plate; and

a second heated and insulated tool container opposed to said heated and insulated tool container, said second heated and insulated tool container including:

a second tool heater plate adapted for attachment to an opposed platen of said press;

at least one load bearing spacer interposed said second tool heater plate and said opposed platen;

a second insulation enclosure having:

a base portion interposed said second tool heater plate and said opposed platen; and

a perimeter wall portion extending in a substantially perpendicular direction away from said base portion and surrounding said second tool heater plate; and

a second forming tool mounted to said second tool heater plate, such that said second forming tool is separately heated by said second tool heater plate; and

a perimeter seal attached to at least one of said heated and insulated tool containers and adapted for sealing engagement with the other of said heated and insulated tool containers;

wherein said forming tools are individually heated by respective said tool heater plates and are insulated from said press, further wherein said apparatus closes together such that a portion of one of said insulation enclosures fits within a portion of the other of said insulation enclosures to define a closed insulation vessel so as to insulate said forming tools from the surrounding environment.

12. (canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for hot gas blow-forming within a press having a press bed and an opposed press ram, said apparatus comprising:

an integrally heated heater plate mounted to said press bed;

a layer of insulation positioned between said integrally heated heater plate and said press bed;

a second integrally heated heater plate mounted to said press ram;

a second layer of insulation positioned between said second integrally heated heater plate and said press ram;

a forming tool mounted to said integrally heated heater plate, said forming tool being separately heated by said integrally heated heater plate;

a second forming tool mounted to said second integrally heated heater plate, said second forming tool being separately heated by said second integrally heated heater plate; and

first and second insulation enclosures respectively at least partially surrounding said heater plates and said forming tools so as to insulate ~~said~~ heater plates and said forming tools from the outside environment such that, when said apparatus is closed for hot gas blow-forming, a portion of one of said insulation enclosures fits within a portion of the other of said insulation enclosures to insulate said forming tools from the environment.

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 13, further comprising a perimeter seal attached to one of said insulation enclosures.